

CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE MINUTES

January 25, 2012

The City Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met at 5:30 p.m. in the Conference Room on the 25th day of January, 2012, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted in the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and the Norman Public Library at 225 North Webster 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT: Councilmembers Gallagher, Kovach, Lockett, and
Chairman Dillingham

ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Mayor Rosenthal
Councilmember Jim Griffith
Mr. Greg Hall, Street Superintendent
Mr. Rick Knighton, Assistant City Attorney
Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager
Mr. Angelo Lombardo, Traffic Engineer
Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works
Ms. Karla Chapman, Administrative Technician

OTHER GUESTS PRESENT: Mr. Zac Abbott, Ward 4 Council Candidate
Mr. Jimmy Adair, Downtown Merchant
Mr. Stephen Koranda, Norman Convention and
Visitors Bureau
Ms. Janice Oak, Progressive Independence

UPDATE AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE DOWNTOWN PARKING LOT.

Chairman Dillingham said the City continues to work with small business owners, private citizens, employers, and the Norman Downtowners Association and have a general feeling of goodwill between the Cleveland County Commissioners, as they are interested in exploring a cooperative downtown parking lot. She said the key debate will be over the location of a proposed downtown parking lot, but she felt it can certainly be something to overcome. Chairman Dillingham said in the meantime the City needs to decide how best to manage the Gray Street Parking Lot and expand it appropriately.

Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said tonight's presentation overview will include information on the 2003 Parking Study; history of the Gray Street parking lot; parking demand over time; parking management options and Staff recommendations; and a possible parking lot expansion.

2003 Parking Study

Mr. O'Leary said in 2003, the City hired Carter & Burgess, Inc., now Jacobs Engineering, to conduct a parking study for downtown Norman and the campus corner areas. During the same time, Norman had made major efforts either completed or underway to include the restoration of the Railway Depot; extension of Legacy Trail along the railroad corridor; update of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan; and the consideration of a central location for a new Norman Public Library. Mr. O'Leary said the parking study was to identify a parking strategy for Norman and the goals included outlining the City's needs for mitigation of existing parking deficiencies and to meet future parking demand.

Mr. O'Leary said the 2003 Parking Study determined there was a shortage of parking during peak periods on typical weekdays and a shortage of convenient parking would increase with future planned development. He said the Study also revealed the demand for parking is not uniform, i.e., deficient in core areas and plentiful in peripheral areas; the current rates for metered parking are low; and there is a shortage of long-term parking spaces. He noted the 2003 rates for metered parking have not changed and the current rate for metered parking is \$0.25 per hour. Mr. O'Leary said the 2003 Parking Study also revealed eight of the 41 Central Business District (CBD) blocks were observed to have parking deficiencies to include the County Courthouse, City Hall, and the Post Office and the demand in the eight CBD blocks exceeds supply by 375 spaces. He noted there were parking spaces available, but they were three or more blocks away. Staff recommendations from the 2003 Parking Study included:

- Increase parking supply in the CBD and Campus Corner;
- Change parking meter rates to have more time limits and to generally increase rates;
- Establish a parking enterprise fund to manage parking related revenues and expenditures;
- Implement parking validation program in CBD;
- Promote remote parking and opportunities for additional transit service;
- Develop surface parking lot on Gray Street between Peters Avenue and Crawford Avenue;
- Alternate location identified as the Bank One/American First Abstract site – located south of Main Street;
- Add more metered on-street parking; and
- Develop a multi-level parking structure on the site of the new surface parking lot once a positive revenue stream has been established.

Councilmember Kovach asked Staff if there will be a cost to change parking meter rates and Mr. Angelo Lombardo, Traffic Engineer, said it will be a nominal cost, but the cost(s) can be absorbed with the City's operating budget. Mr. O'Leary felt \$0.25 per hour rate is a national low, but raising the hourly rate would initially be disliked by citizens.

Gray Street Parking Lot

Mr. O'Leary said the Parking Lot was completed in January 2007, and has been operating for five (5) years. He said the construction of the Parking Lot including land, was approximately \$1.1 million, and has 104 spaces available to the public. He said the Parking Lot has the potential for 48 additional parking spaces with the removal of the current Facility Maintenance Building which is located on the northwest end of the Parking Lot. He said the cost to demo the existing Facility Maintenance Building, along with the installation of paving, lighting, signage, and striping will cost approximately \$100,000.

Mr. O'Leary said the Parking Lot expansion is possible because of the purchase of the Gray Street property; formerly the Service Experts building and if Council decides to demo the current Facility Maintenance building located on Gray Street, the Facility Maintenance Division would be relocated to the recently purchased Gray Street property. Councilmember Kovach asked the cost of the former Service Experts building and Mr. O'Leary said it was in the \$1 million range. Mr. O'Leary said the current Facility Maintenance building has reached its useful life and while more space will be available at the former Service Experts building it will need to be adapted/constructed for Facility Maintenance use. He said the City would most likely need to hire a contractor to demolish the current Facility Maintenance building, but the Street Division could install the additional parking lot, spaces, etc., similar to the work they did on the current Parking Lot in 2006-2007. Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager, said Ms. Brenda Hall, City Clerk, is currently preparing to bring forward the Facility Maintenance building removal option as part of the FYE 2013 Budget and Staff has received informal bids to determine a cost estimate.

Councilmember Kovach asked if the current Facility Maintenance building is used only for storage or did the Facility Maintenance employees actually have offices in the building. Mr. Lewis said it is mostly used for warehousing commodities, i.e., paper towels, toilet paper, cleaning supplies, etc., but also includes office(s) and a shop area where minor work can be performed. Councilmember Kovach asked whether the Facility Maintenance division could utilize the old Juvenile Services Inc., (JSI) building located on Gray Street when the Police Department moves their storage from the JSI building to the Smalley Center located on Lindsey Street. He felt if Facility Maintenance could be relocated to the JSI building, rather than the former Service Experts building, then possibly Municipal Court could utilize the former Service Experts building. He asked if there was another function planned for the JSI building and Staff said the JSI building will probably need to be demolished because of deterioration. Mayor Rosenthal said Facility Maintenance will gain efficiencies if they relocate to the former Service Experts building because they will be closer to the City's main complex.

Mr. O'Leary said it was always the City's intention to eventually make the Parking Lot a paid parking lot. He said in April 2007, Staff confirmed that 31 parking spaces could potentially be leased according to merchant requests, but Council felt it was not necessary at the time. Mr. O'Leary said the Vista Building was vacated in late 2008 for major structural repairs which decreased the Parking Lot demand. He said since the Vista Building re-opened in 2011, the Parking Lot is near capacity and 50% of the lot is occupied by long term users, i.e., more than three hours.

Mr. O'Leary said Parking Service Officers (PSO) from the Norman Police Department (NPD) monitored parking at the Parking Lot between December 1, and December 15, 2011. The vehicles parked in the lot were counted during three different times of the day, 9:00 a.m., noon, and 3:00 p.m. He said tires were also chalk-marked during the 9:00 a.m. and noon counts to help determine the length of their stay. Mr. O'Leary said Staff determined 60% of the 104 spaces are full by 9:00 a.m. and parking demand reaches 90% by the noon hour. He said parking demand is highest in the afternoon reaching 94% during the 3:00 p.m. count and long term parkers, i.e., those parking for more than three hours, account for almost half of the total count.

Councilmember Kovach asked how many of the downtown businesses are open at 9:00 a.m. and Chairman Dillingham felt at least one-third of the businesses were open by 9:00 a.m., e.g., barbers, food establishments, banks, etc.

Parking Management Options

Mr. O'Leary said with Council direction, the removal of the existing Facility Maintenance building would allow the current Parking Lot to expand from 104 parking spaces to 154 spaces in the future. He said options for the Parking Lot, including expansion, could include:

- Free with unrestricted time
- Free with limited time (using signage)
- Permit only
- Permit/Free
- Permit/Hourly
- Permit fees
- Parking meters (25 or ¼ of the lot)
- Pay and display
- Pay in-lane

Mr. O'Leary said based on previous data collection and recent observations, 50 parking spaces of the 104 existing parking spaces could be leased, leaving the remaining 54 existing spaces to be open for public parking. He said the leased spaces would be located within the existing parking lot towards the back by the mural/wall, which would make it easier to install parking signage, control, and enforce.

Permit/Lease Fees

Mr. O'Leary said a portion of the Parking Lot could be designated for leased/permit parking only, stating fees could be collected from permit holders on a regular basis, i.e., monthly, semi-annually, or annually, and Council may want to consider reducing fees in exchange for a longer term lease. He said implementing a permit/lease fee(s) system would cost approximately \$1,000 and include signage, permit application forms, informational brochures, and permits. He provided a slide depicting what a permit might look like stating a customer would hang the permit from their visor or rear-view mirror.

Multi-Meter Systems

Mr. O'Leary said the remainder of the Parking Lot could be available for public parking which might be controlled by a Multi-Meter Pay by Space (PBS) system or by a Multi-Meter Pay and Display (PAD) system. He said both Multi-Meter PBS and PAD systems are very modern, hourly parking systems and both accept payment in the form of cash, credit card, or cell phone. Mr. O'Leary said Duncan Parking Technologies provided quotes/specs to Staff for the PBS and PAD Multi-Meter systems, but a bid process would be established if Council desires to implement either of these systems. A Multi-Meter Pay and Display (PAD) system would cost approximately \$31,104 for two units. He said basically a driver would park, pay at the machine, retrieve a receipt, and return to the vehicle to display the receipt. A Multi-Meter Pay by Space (PBS) system would cost approximately \$22,091 for two units. He said with the PBS system, the driver would park and pay based upon the parking space number. He said both methods would work on the honor system and would not have any on-premises staffing, but would require Parking Services Officer (PSO) enforcement.

Mr. O'Leary said PSO Staff currently has two (2) Handheld Enforcement Devices (HED) but the HEDs would need to be upgraded if Council decided to implement either the Multi-Meter PBS or PAD systems. He said an HED upgrade would be a one-piece, lightweight, handheld system with software specifically configured for operational needs, so that citation(s) can be issued quickly and easily, making the process take a fraction of the time required with manual processes. Mr. O'Leary said the AutoCITE X3 HED upgrades would cost approximately \$18,613 per unit, including training and paper stock. He said the HED upgrade would also include a lithium battery with a built-in camera and would automatically issue citation(s) from the unit.

Mr. O'Leary said the anticipated parking lot revenue for the 50 lease/permit parking spaces would be approximately \$26,000 per year and discounts could be offered to those leasing spaces on a long-term lease, for example a year lease could be 25 to 30 percent less per month than a monthly lease. Initially, the remaining parking would be 54 spaces and the anticipated revenue is estimated to be \$28,080 per year. The future remaining parking, once the Facility Maintenance building is removed, is predicted to be 104 parking spaces and the anticipated revenue is estimated to be \$54,080 per year.

Councilmember Kovach asked if the multi-meter systems are portable in case the City should install a parking garage at some point in the future and Mr. O'Leary said yes they can be moved. Mr. O'Leary said the multi-meter systems and HEDs are also expandable and can be applied to areas on Main Street, Asp Avenue, etc., which meets the consistency request concerning parking meters.

Mr. O'Leary said Staff presented parking management options to the Norman Downtowners Association on May 13, 2010, and the following comments were offered:

- Permit spaces may not be ideal
- Parking on Main Street?
- Options for variable parking time limits
- Need long-term spaces
- Need 21st Century pay in lane system
- Need consistency
- 24-hour enforcement?
- Need a survey of usage after 6:00 p.m.
- Locate permit spaces closest to Gray Street
- Need increased/better enforcement
- More sales tax downtown
- Need a strategy for all of downtown
- Attract and accommodate users
- Reduced rate for merchants?
- Should evening users pay to park?

Staff Recommendations

Mr. O'Leary said Staff recommends the Multi-Meter Pay by Space (PBS) system and said it offers the most flexibility to be adapted to on-street use, should the downtown parking system be expanded to including parking on Main Street as well. He said this would afford users consistency for the parking controls both on-street and off-street. Further, Staff recommends a portion of the lot be reserved for permit parking and also recommends handheld enforcement devices (HED) because they simplify the tasks associated with enforcement.

Mr. O'Leary said assuming funds are available to cover the system costs, the permit parking could be implemented along with two (2) Multi-Meter PBS units within six (6) months. He said assuming that the use of the lot does not change once fees are implemented, the cost associated with the entire system could be entirely recovered within 12 months. Mr. O'Leary requested direction from the Committee regarding a strategy to meet the increased parking lot demand. He also requested guidance regarding a decision on revenue collection system and identifying additional funding sources for implementation of management system and/or expansion of the lot.

Chairman Dillingham said the expansion of the Parking Lot could be a "phased" project. She felt that nationally, most cities charge for parking and they charge more than \$0.25 per hour. She suggested moving forward with implementing lease/permit parking for 30 to 31 spaces, but possibly waiting for the next budget year to demolish the current Facility Maintenance building. Councilmember Lockett said she agreed with Chairman Dillingham and said the City should implement paid parking. Chairman Dillingham felt the biggest issue will be public relations, i.e., if the City charges for the Parking Lot the citizens will want to know what the City's intentions are for Main Street parking. Councilmember Kovach wondered if merchants could "police" their merchant parking spaces and Chairman Dillingham said yes, but it can be difficult for merchants to enforce. Councilmember Kovach requested Staff research other cities in reference to the meter fee rate and said he liked the concept of having two-hour meters. He felt the two-hour time limit would be more convenient versus a one-hour time limit for citizens/customers, but wondered if the City has enough Staff to enforce. Mr. Lewis said adjustments may need to be made, but there is enough Staff to put into effect a two-hour parking enforcement.

Councilmember Kovach said Mr. Brad Goodman, downtown merchant/property owner, believes there is a condition of the purchase agreement that exists pertaining to the downtown parking and asked Staff to provide the agreement to Council. He also requested Staff address Mr. Goodman's concerns, along with a list of items the City can or can not do and/or should or should not do. Mr. Rick Knighton, Assistant City Attorney, said Staff will prepare a list and Mr. O'Leary said the agreement, although well intended, is not very clear. Mr. O'Leary said the agreement is a matter of interpretation and he could not quote the exact language, but felt the general principle states that the purchase of the property for the Parking Lot was contingent upon making spaces available for *customers* in order to generate business and sales tax. Chairman Dillingham said another factor to consider is whether a tenant of a building can argue that they are a customer of the landlord. She felt the 50 proposed leased spaces would give a very safe interpretation unless there is a strict covenant in the agreement that states the majority or (substantially) all of the parking lot must be used for customer parking.

Mayor Rosenthal felt the City needed an immediate response for retailers and restaurant owners who are very concerned about what is happening at the Parking Lot. She said since the City will need to budget the Multi-Meter PBS system, she felt the City should immediately implement permit parking at the Parking Lot, as well as consistently enforcing a two-hour parking limit both on Main Street and in the Parking Lot. She said Norman needs a consistent downtown parking plan and Mr. Stephen Koranda, Norman Convention and Visitors Bureau (NCVB) Director, stated he agreed. Councilmember Kovach asked what blocks will be included in the downtown metered parking spaces and Mayor Rosenthal felt the immediate response needs to be on both Main Street and Gray Street between the railroad tracks and Porter Avenue. Councilmember Kovach said he also felt the lease permit parking and/or employees should walk the furthest and it made sense to accommodate and make parking most convenient for the customer(s). He wondered if the proposed 50 lease permit spaces was a little high and requested the lease permit spaces be installed on the row abutting Gray Street.

Mayor Rosenthal felt discussions with the County concerning a shared parking lot needs to start in earnest and needs to include citizens from the Downtowners Association, recommending Mike Tower and Jimmy Adair. She said the County is considering property immediately north of the County Courthouse/Annex Building to perhaps construct a parking lot and it is not the City's intention to turn all of the downtown area into a parking lot because that defeats the economic draw. Mayor Rosenthal said the City needs to collaborate with the County in terms of hopefully not tearing down building(s) but instead find a central location for a downtown parking lot.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint Presentation entitled, "Downtown Parking Lot Update, City Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee," dated January 25, 2012

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION.

Chairman Dillingham said the Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART) Lloyd Noble shuttle was down a little, but was probably due to the nicer weather and people were walking more.

Items submitted for the record

1. Cleveland Area Rapid Transit Ridership Totals for the Month of December 2011

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

City Clerk

Mayor